



FAIRFAX  
COUNTY

V I R G I N I A

# STAFF REPORT

## PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Parking Rates for Certain Residential Uses

### PUBLIC HEARING DATES

**Planning Commission**

September 14, 2006 at 8:15 p.m.

**Board of Supervisors**

October 23, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.

**PREPARED BY  
ZONING ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING  
703-324-1314**

July 31, 2006

DP



Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): Reasonable accommodation is available upon 7 days advance notice.  
For additional information on ADA call 703-324-1334 or TTY 711 (Virginia Relay Center).

## **STAFF COMMENT**

The proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment is on the 2006 Priority 1 Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program and was prompted by the recommendations from the July 2000 Infill and Residential Development Study (Infill Study). The Infill Study recommended that the parking rates for single family attached dwellings (townhouses) be increased. In conjunction with the Board's endorsement of the 2003 Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program, the Board expanded the request to include single family detached and multiple family dwelling units. As such, the proposed amendment addresses the parking rates for single family detached, single family attached and multiple family dwelling units.

This staff report supplements the Residential Parking Study (the Study), dated June 15, 2006, prepared by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation and included as Attachment A. Outlined in the Study is the process by which staff evaluated residential parking demand; the results of on-site parking surveys conducted by an outside consultant; a history of the parking rates within the County; a comparison of the Fairfax County parking rates with other jurisdictions; and a summary of all of the issues generated by this evaluation. A detailed discussion of the proposed amendment and the data used to support the advertised parking rates and staff's recommendations for minimum parking requirements for residential uses are contained in Attachment A.

## **CURRENT AND PROPOSED REGULATIONS**

Parking rates are currently set forth for individual uses in Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance. The minimum parking requirement for single family detached (SFD) dwelling units is currently 2.0 spaces per unit. The minimum required parking for single family attached (SFA) dwelling units is currently 2.3 spaces per unit and the minimum parking requirement for multiple family (MF) dwelling units is currently 1.6 spaces per unit. All required off-street parking spaces must be located on the same lot as the dwelling unit or in common spaces that are provided and designated within a development that is subject to a single development plan and/or site plan approval.

It is staff's recommendation to maintain the current parking rate of 2.0 spaces per unit for certain SFD dwelling units, but to make a distinction based upon the type of street that serves the lot. The current rate of 2.0 space per unit would apply to lots located on public streets and for lots located on private streets of 36 feet or more in width from face of curb to face of curb. For those SFD lots located on private streets of less than 36 feet in width from face of curb to face of curb, the proposed rate is 3.0 spaces per unit. This distinction is based on the fact that a 36 foot wide street cross section is the smallest typical street cross section that is provided in the Public Facilities Manual (PFM) that can accommodate parking on at least one side of the street. It is believed appropriate to require a higher parking rate for those SFD dwelling units that are located on streets that can not accommodate on-street parking than for those units where there is opportunity for on-street parking. For SFA dwelling units, the proposed parking rate is 2.7 spaces per unit, an increase of 0.4 space per unit over the current rate of 2.3 spaces per unit. For MF dwelling units, staff is proposing to maintain the current parking rate of 1.6 spaces per unit. As noted, the basis for staff's proposal can be found in Attachment A.

Given that staff has received multiple and varied comments from the Planning Commission, the Board, industry representatives, and others in the Fairfax County community and in order to give the Board additional flexibility in its consideration, this amendment includes optional parking rates that are greater than those recommended by staff for each type of dwelling unit. For SFDs, the advertised range is between the current rate of 2.0 spaces per dwelling unit and 4.0 spaces per dwelling unit, allowing this range to be applicable for both public and private streets. For SFAs, the advertised range is between the current rate of 2.3 spaces per dwelling unit and 3.2 spaces per dwelling unit. For MF developments, the advertised range is between the current rate of 1.6 spaces per dwelling and 1.8 spaces per dwelling unit.

The advertised range for all three dwelling unit types is based on the Study and certain assumptions and factors. One factor that was considered relates to the rounding method used for the provision of parking. Under the Zoning Ordinance, anytime a minimum parking requirement results in a portion of a space being required, the minimum parking requirement is rounded up to the next whole number. Based on an assumption of 75% garage utilization, the results of the parking survey indicated a parking demand for SFD units of 3.11 spaces per dwelling. Because a SFD development could consist of one unit and in light of the rounding practices described above, the minimum parking requirements for single family detached dwelling units should consist of a whole number. Therefore, the advertised rates for SFDs are whole numbers between the current rate of 2.0 up to 4.0 spaces per dwelling unit.

As noted, one factor that greatly impacted the results of the parking study was the assumed amount of garage usage for the storage of vehicles. It is reasonable to assume that not all garages are being used for the storage of vehicles, but it is also reasonable to assume that a certain percentage of garages are being used for the storage of vehicles. Although the actual garage occupancy could not be confirmed as these spaces are blocked from view by garage doors, staff believed it appropriate to assume that 75% of garages were used for the parking of vehicles. Other assumptions that staff made were to increase the parking demand by 10% to accommodate visitor parking and to add one standard deviation to the average parking demand. The advertised ranges would accommodate the increased parking demands if it was assumed that 100% of the garages were used for the parking of vehicles. With these assumptions, the range of advertised parking rates for SFA developments is between the current rate of 2.3 spaces per unit and 3.2 spaces per dwelling unit and the advertised rate for the MF developments is between the current rate of 1.6 spaces per dwelling unit and 1.8 spaces per dwelling unit.

The intent of advertising the range of parking rates for each type of dwelling unit is to provide for flexibility in what rate could be adopted without the need for readvertising the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment. The Planning Commission and Board can consider any rate within the specified range for each of the three types of dwelling units. Additionally, even though staff is proposing no change to the current parking rate for MF units, the advertisement would allow the Planning Commission and Board to consider any rate within the advertised range.

## **DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

As noted on Pages 10-13 of the Study, staff is proposing additional recommendations for the Board's consideration. With regard to sites located near an existing or proposed transit corridor, which may include Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs), Transportation Management Districts (TDMs) and Transit Station Areas (TSAs), an exception to the specified parking rates should be considered in order to encourage the use of mass transit. Under the current provisions of Par. 5 of Sect. 11-102 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Board may reduce the number of required parking spaces in areas that are located near mass transit stations. Additionally, under Par. 26 of Sect. 11-102, in conjunction with the approval of a proffer to establish a TDM program, or if a development is subject to an approved proffer for the establishment of a TDM program, the Board may also reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces. It is noted that County staff has been requested to look at possible TOD, TMD and TSA strategies and ways of implementing them in Fairfax County. Residential and nonresidential parking rates and any appropriate exceptions from those rates in association with such strategies should be considered as part of this analysis. In addition, consideration should be given to imposing maximum parking rates in order to encourage alternative forms of transportation.

Another possible exception to the proposed parking rates involves the provision of affordable and/or workforce housing. Currently, the High-Rise Affordability Panel is working to develop policies and regulations that will produce affordable and/or workforce housing in high-rise residential buildings. A considerable expense in the provision of affordable housing is the cost of parking for each unit when such parking is provided in structures. As part of the High-Rise Affordability Panel's recommended policy that was preliminarily endorsed by the Board, a recommendation for exceptions to the parking rate for affordable and bonus market rate units has been included. As this Panel and staff work toward development of regulations to implement the policies, staff recommends that a reduction in parking continue to be considered as a way to promote affordability when alternate modes of transportation are available to a site.

Another consideration that relates to changes in residential parking rates is the impact on impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff. The increase in residential parking requirements would result in a corresponding increase in the amount of impervious surfaces. Such increase in impervious surface as a result of increased parking needs to be recognized as a competing interest in the goal of reducing the amount of stormwater runoff from development. The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services is currently developing Low Impact Development (LID) standards and one of the primary goals of such standards would be to minimize the amount of land disturbance for stormwater management and water quality purposes. Staff recommends that impervious surface and runoff concerns related to parking are more appropriately considered as part of the LID's efforts rather than as part of this amendment, given that the LID effort is a comprehensive review of all impervious surface and runoff issues than this amendment.

Staff's final two recommendations pertain to residential driveways. The current parking requirements specify only the number of parking spaces required on a site, but do not dictate whether those spaces are to be provided on driveways, in common parking areas or in garages. It has been staff's experience, particularly in P districts where there is no minimum required front yard, that very short

driveways have been installed to serve an on-site private garage. In those cases, even though the driveway does not satisfy the minimum geometric design standards set forth in the PFM for a parking space, vehicles are oftentimes parked on these driveways, causing overhang onto the travel way and blockage of walkways. Additionally, where shared or common driveways are provided, the distance between the driveway and an individual private garage is frequently less than the 18 foot minimum required for a parking space. Nevertheless, parking often occurs in these areas, thus blocking access to the shared or common driveway. Both of these situations have led to complaints received by the Zoning Enforcement Branch. Staff is recommending that the issue of driveway length in P districts and the issue of PFM geometric design standards for shared or common driveways be evaluated in conjunction with staff's ongoing review of P districts. Notwithstanding any future amendments to the P district and PFM requirements, driveway design should be evaluated in the context of the review of any rezoning and or development plan application.

## CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the recommended changes will accomplish the Board's desire to provide for adequate parking in all types of residential uses, subject to continued review to address such issues as parking near mass transit facilities, stormwater runoff and impervious surface, and design standards for driveways. Staff further believes the proposed increase in the parking rate for single family dwellings is necessary to address the parking demand for these types of units, as evidenced by the parking survey and other data evaluated. In recognition that an increased parking rate would impact projects that have been previously approved but are not constructed and projects that are currently under review by the County, staff is recommending a delayed effective date and that certain developments be grandfathered from the new parking requirements. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment with a deferred effective date of 90 days after adoption. Staff also recommends that the following be grandfathered from the amendment:

- Special exception, proffered rezonings or development plans that were approved prior to the effective date of this amendment when such approvals contain a specific parking requirement.
- Building and site plans submitted on or before the effective date of the amendment, provided such plans are (a) approved within twelve months of the return of the initial submission to the applicant or agent, (b) the plan remains valid, (c) building permits for the structures shown on the approved plan are issued and (d) the structures and uses are constructed in accordance with such building permits.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT

*This proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment is based on the Zoning Ordinance in effect as of July 31, 2006 and there may be other proposed amendments which may affect some of the numbering, order or text arrangement of the paragraphs or sections set forth in this amendment, which other amendments may be adopted prior to action on this amendment. In such event, any necessary renumbering or editorial revisions caused by the adoption of any Zoning Ordinance amendments by the Board of Supervisors prior to the date of adoption of this amendment will be administratively incorporated by the Clerk in the printed version of this amendment following Board adoption.*

*Items in bold brackets are provided for advertising purposes and to allow the Board to approve up to the higher number if so desired. The underlined text outside of the brackets is the staff recommendation.*

1    **Amend Article 11, Off-Street Parking and Loading, Private Streets, Part 1, Off-Street Parking**  
 2    **Spaces, Sect. 11-103, Minimum Required Spaces for Residential and Lodging Uses, by revising**  
 3    **Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 to read as follows:**

4  
 5    Minimum off-street parking spaces accessory to the uses hereinafter designated shall be provided as  
 6    follows:

7  
 8    3.    Dwelling, Single Family Detached:

9  
 10        Two (2) spaces per unit for lots with frontage on a public street or a private street of not less than  
 11        thirty-six (36) feet in width from face of curb to face of curb and three (3) spaces per unit for lots with  
 12        frontage on a private street of less than thirty-six (36) feet in width from face of curb to face of curb,  
 13        provided that only one (1) such space must have convenient access to a street ***[advertised***  
 14        ***maximum is four (4) spaces per unit]***

15  
 16    4.    Dwelling, Single Family Attached:

17  
 18        Two and ~~three~~ seven-tenths (2.3 2.7) spaces per unit, provided, however, that only one (1) such  
 19        space must have convenient access to the street ***[advertised maximum is three and two tenths***  
 20        ***(3.2) spaces per unit]***

21  
 22    5.    Dwelling, Multiple Family:

23  
 24        One and six-tenths (1.6) spaces per unit ***[advertised maximum is one and eight tenths (1.8)***  
 25        ***spaces per unit]***

26

*Copies of the Residential Parking Study contained in Attachment A are available from the Zoning Administration Division at 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 807; Fairfax, Virginia 22035.*